



National Search and Rescue School Marks Its 40th Anniversary.



In 1831 the Secretary of the Treasury directed the revenue cutter *Gallatin* to cruise the coast in search of persons in distress. This was the first time a U.S. federal agency was specifically tasked to search for those who might be in danger. In the ensuing century and a half, federal organizations such as the Revenue Cutter Service, the Life-Saving Service, the modern Coast Guard and the Department of the Army took on additional duties saving lives at sea and on land.

Search and Rescue (SAR) significantly changed on Oct.10, 1966, when the U.S. Coast Guard and U. S. Air Force joined forces to open the National Search and Rescue School. SAR experts from the Coast Guard and Air Force Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service had been aware of an increasing need to establish a school devoted to teaching search and rescue (SAR) techniques. The creation of the National Search and Rescue School created a staff devoted exclusively to training professionals to conduct search and rescue at sea and on land.

Since its inception, the school's mission has been:

"To promote standardization and professionalism within the search and rescue community by providing comprehensive SAR training to selected Coast Guard, Air Force and other personnel."

The school started with a meager \$15,000, a vacant WWII barracks building, and six highly experienced Coast Guard and Air Force members. Since the first class of graduates forty years ago, more than 29,000 have joined the ranks of trained SAR professionals including over 2,174 international students from 148 nations.

For the first decade, SAR “tools of the trade” included the “Manual Solution Method” worksheets, maneuvering boards, dividers and triangles used to manually calculate datum (the most probable location of a search object corrected for drift at sea) and the search area. Using these tools a proficient SAR Controller was able to develop a search plan in about two to three hours. Unlike the later computer aided method, this manual method provided the controller with only a probability of detection (POD) to help him or her determine the quality of the search plan.

In the last decade sophisticated computer modeling and planning tools have replaced these manual methods. SAR Controllers can now compute accurate searches in a matter of minutes that include detailed assessments of the probability that a survivor will be found.

During that time, the SAR School training tools, have evolved from slide projectors and reel-to-reel training films, to DVD videos, computerized presentations, hands-on role-playing scenarios and interactive web-based data collection (e.g. NOAA weather data, street reference/latitude & longitude conversion programs and the Cold Exposure Survivability Model).

Over the years, changes weren't just inside the SAR School. The school itself has packed its bags and planted new roots a few times as well. In 1966, SAR School's single classroom home was an abandoned Army barracks located on Governor's Island, New York. In 1985, SAR School moved to another building on Governor's Island with two modern classrooms and a lab equipped with the latest technology. In 1989, The SAR School closed its doors on Governor's Island for good, and re-opened them for the first time in Hamilton Hall, located at Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown, Va.. In 1995, SAR School moved across base, from Hamilton Hall to Canfield Hall. This move was necessary to accommodate a much needed modern training facility that included, for the first time, computerized SAR programs (G-DOC, CASP & the AMS program).

This move entailed the largest curriculum revision for the SAR School. It brought to SAR training speedier computerized drift calculations, controlled Audio/Visual systems, mock command centers providing realistic case prosecution, and the crossover from antiquated lesson plans, to power point/computer-based presentations.

The National SAR School continues to provide On-scene Coordinator training to coxswains, pilots, and cutter personnel through a four-day Search Coordination and Execution course presented 20 times annually around the country.

In addition, the Air Force team continues to provide quality training in the art of land-based search and rescue. The 5-day Inland SAR Planning course is a comprehensive, graduate-level look at inland search theory and its application to land and air searches for missing persons and aircraft with a focus on wilderness searches.

The course is directed toward SAR leaders in federal, state, and local emergency services and law enforcement, as well as the Civil Air Patrol, international, and volunteer SAR agencies -- those few people who are responsible for the planning and overall conduct of inland searches.

With the expanding demands of the SAR community, the SAR School staff has grown as well. In just a few years, the staff has increased by the following:

	2000		Present day
From	4 CG Officers	To:	8 CG Officers
	6 CG Enlisted		16 Enlisted
	2 CG Auxiliarists		2 Auxiliarists
	2 Air Force members		3 Air Force members
			5 Civilians

Total: 14 staff members

30 staff members

In order to ensure the Coast Guard SAR Community is aligned with Commandant SAR policy, the National SAR School's Command Center Standardization Team (CCST) was created in 2001. Staffed with three officers and six enlisted members, their mission is to: "Support policy and resource decisions by the command center program manager, Commandant (G-RPR), through evaluating and reporting on service-wide command center effectiveness." The CCST continues to provide quality field training while ensuring Sector and District Command Centers are within compliance. The National SAR School has long been the service's repository for expertise and best practices concerning the operation of command centers. Establishment of the Command Center Standardization Team (CCST) as a component and function of the National SAR School enabled this expertise to be brought to bear during on-site assessments of the roughly 50 command centers operated by the Coast Guard.

The emblem of the National Search and Rescue School was developed in 1966 by the Grumman Corporation to give the school a unique image. It depicts an albatross rescuing a dolphin from the perils of the sea. The Albatross is regarded by many as a symbol of good luck to the mariner, while the Dolphin is considered by some a representation of the mariner himself. When most people unfamiliar with the school see the emblem for the first time, their first remark is usually "it looks like a sea gull having lunch!" Despite that observation, the emblem continues as part of the SAR School's heritage and over the years it has become not only an identity of the school but a symbol that embodies search and rescue personnel from all walks of life. It represents that small group of outstanding professionals committed to the humanitarian endeavor of saving lives. Graduates of the National SAR School are authorized to wear the commemorative school pin and patch with the emblem that is unchanged since its introduction 40 years ago.

Since the National SAR School is jointly manned by members of the Coast Guard and the Air Force, it is fitting its motto "*ALWAYS READY, THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE*" is a combination of the mottoes of the two services. "*Semper Paratus*"--meaning *Always Ready*--is the Coast Guard's motto and the title of its service song. The motto: "*That others may live*" says it all for the air rescue community of the Air Force.

For 40 years, the staff of the National Search and Rescue school has taken great pride in providing Search and Rescue training of the highest quality to the lifesavers of the world. The pride and genuine concern the SAR School staff displays year after year has made the National SAR School the premier search and rescue training entity throughout the SAR community.

The past 40 years of "hitting it hard and hitting it fast" have certainly been a great run! We the SAR School staff would like to thank the SAR community for all your support. It has been an honor serving you and we look forward to what the next 40 years of SAR advancements will bring!

And remember, this is *YOUR* school, so keep in touch and keep those suggestions coming.



The following is a list of significant events within the last 40 years of Search and Rescue School's existence...

- 1966: SAR School opens on Governor's Island New York
- 1971: OASIS created: Operational Automated Shipboard Information System designed to provide almost instantaneous search planning solutions.
- 1974: CASP introduced to field.
- 1976: The Electronic Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) is presented to the SAR community.
- 1976: Hewlett Packard HP-97 Programmable Printing Desktop calculator used by SAR Controllers to calculate drift & datum.
- 1977: Development of International Maritime SAR Plan.
- 1978: First of series of visual detection experiments.
- 1979: COSPAS/SARSAT program developed.
- 1981: FLIR, used by an HH-52 aircrew, makes its operational debut locating a 9-foot sailboat. Fatigue limits for SAR boat crews are created.
- 1981/82: First launch of a SAR Satellite.
- 1982: SAR Assistance Policy bill enacted.
First use of SARSAT system rescued three from a light plane crash in Canada (during SARSAT evaluation phase).
- 1984: Offshore range of 41-foot UTB increased to 30NM if equipped with Loran C. Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer program established.
- 1984: CASP revision II came on line.
- 1986: 911 made available throughout the country, impacting the SAR notification process.
- 1989: National SAR School moves to Training Center Yorktown, Virginia.
- 1990: SAR Planner of the Year award created.
- 1993: SMC Assistance Decision Matrix developed to assist controllers in determining Distress/Non-distress.
- 1995: 406 EPIRBs required to be registered.
GPS/SLDMBs developed & tested for SAR.
- 1998: SC&E trips increase from three visits per year to six per year.
SAR Fundamentals available through CG Institute.
New Leeway tables. (Allen/Plourde).
- 1999: National SAR Plan replaces the previous SAR Plan.
SAR School website created.
SAR Fundamentals course converted to an on-line course.
- 2001: SC&E trips increase from 6 visits per year to 10 per year.
Command Center Standardization Team (CCST) created.
- 2003: OS rate created.
Civilian SAR Controller hiring process advances Coast Guard-wide.
JAWS computer drift model introduced to the SAR community.
- 2004: First Civilian Instructor assigned to the SAR School staff.
SC&E trips increase from 10 visits per year to 20 per year.
Classroom modernization, increase from one classroom to two classrooms.

2005: Classroom modernization, increase from two classrooms to three classrooms.

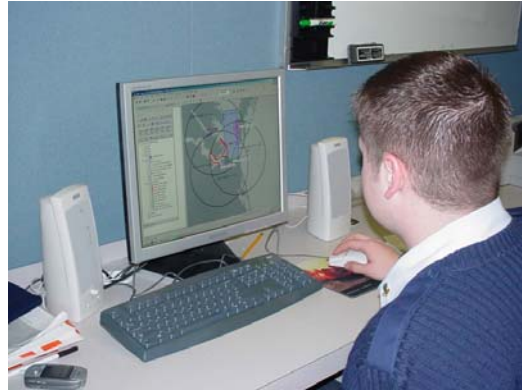
Rescue21 installed at field units replacing devastated Gulf Coast CG communications.

2006/7 **R-21** will be added to the labs in SAR School

2006/7 **SAROPS** will replace the current C2PC / SAR tools/ JAWS & CASP drift models.



SAR School classroom environment.



Student calculating Uncorrelated Distress scenario.



Students prosecuting mock distress scenario.